

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 13261

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT VS

SUBJ: MONTAGNARD DISSIDENCE

FOLG TEL SENT TO SAIGON INFO BIEN HOA CAN THO DANANG FM NHA TRANG
OCT 11 RPTD FYI

QTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NHA TRANG 0632

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT VS

SUBJECT: MONTAGNARD DISSIDENCE

1. THE FOLLOWING IS AN UP-DATE ON MONTAGNARD DISSIDENCE SINCE
NHA TRANG'S A-11 WAS SUBMITTED ON AUGUST 13, 1974.

2. IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS IN DARLAC PROVINCE THERE HAS BEEN
A MARKED INCREASE IN THE INCIDENCE OF ACTS OF VIOLENCE DIRECTED
AGAINST VIETNAMESE OFFICIALS, MERCHANTS, TRADERS AND ORDINARY
CITIZENS TRAVELING THE HIGHWAYS. WHEREAS FORMERLY THE CITIZENRY
HAD TO CONTEND SOLELY WITH VC/NVA HARASSMENT, IN RECENT MONTHS
VARIOUS MONTAGNARD DISSIDENT AND/OR BANDIT ELEMENTS HAVE BEEN
RESPONSIBLE FOR A PATTERN OF EXPLOITATION OF PRIVATE CITIZENS AND
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ATTACKS ON OFFICIALS. WITHIN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF SEPTEMBER

ALONE, 10 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND 25 WOUNDED DURING SUCH ASSAULTS. MERCHANTS HAVE REPORTEDLY BEEN ROBBED NEAR THEIR VILLAGES; CIVILIAN BUSES AND CARGO TRUCKS ARE ATTACKED ON MAJOR HIGHWAYS (QL-14 AND QL-21) AND LOCAL PRIESTS HAVE BEEN THREATENED WITH HARM IF THEY DON'T PROVIDE RICE TO BANDIT FORCES. IN THE MOST NOTABLE RECENT INCIDENT, AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT WAS MADE BY ASSASSINS ON THE LIFE OF MR. HO DAO CON, PUBLIC PROSECUTOR OF DARLAC, IN HIS HOME IN BAN ME THUOT. THREE HIGHLANDERS, ALLEGEDLY IN THE EMPLOY OF THE DISSIDENT MONTAGNARD LEADER, KPA KOI, WERE RESPONSIBLE. PERHAPS NOT INCIDENTALLY, THIS EVENT OCCURRED THREE DAYS BEFORE THE TRIAL IN BAN ME THUOT OF 195 MONTAGNARDS CHARGED WITH ASSORTED CRIMINAL OFFENSES.

3. THE MAJORITY OF THESE ACTS OF VIOLENCE AND INTIMIDATION HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED TO EXTREMIST ELEMENTS LOOSELY OPERATING UNDER THE BANNER OF FULRO, AND VARIOUS GANGS OF BANDITS. THE GROWTH IN BANDITRY HAS BECOME A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT PROBLEM FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL. THESE GROUPS ARE COMPOSED PRIMARILY OF MILITARY DESERTERS AND OTHER CRIMINALS (LARGELY MONTAGNARD) WHO BEAR ALLEGIANCE TO NO FLAG AND WHO REPORTEDLY INDISCRIMINATELY ATTACK BOTH VC AND FULRO AS WELL AS GVN. RECENT INTELLIGENCE INDICATES THAT AN EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO ORGANIZE SEVERAL BANDIT FORCES UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF THE MONTAGNARD Y'ALA B. YA (ALIAS ALA) WHO PRESENTLY COMMANDS A GROUP OF 150 MEN OPERATING IN BUON HO, PHUOC AN, AND BAN ME THUOT DISTRICTS. ALA AND HIS MEN HAVE ARMED THEMSELVES WELL THROUGH THEFT AND DESERTIONS FROM THE RANKS OF LOCAL TERRITORIAL FORCES. THEY HAVE THUS FAR FRUSTRATED THE EFFORTS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO BRING THEM UNDER CONTROL. THE POLICE CHIEF IN BAN ME THUOT HAS STATED IT IS VIRTUALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO SECURE THE OVER 200 KM OF ROADS AND NUMEROUS PLANTATIONS FOUND THROUGHOUT DARLAC.

4. GVN OFFICIALS ARE CONFRONTED WITH WHAT APPEARS TO BE GROWING DISAFFECTION AMONG THE RANKS OF PROVINCIAL TERRITORIAL UNITS DUE, AT LEAST IN PART, TO THE GROWING SUCCESS OF FULRO PROSELYTIZING AMONG MONTAGNARD TROOPS. ON SEPTEMBER 13, COLONEL LE HUU DUC, CHIEF OF THE SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING CENTER AT MR-II HQS, VISITED BAN ME THUOT TO INITIATE AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE DEGREE OF FULRO PENETRATION INTO RF, PF, AND PSDF UNITS IN DARLAC. THIS INQUIRY WAS STIMULATED BY THE DEFECTION A FEW DAYS

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EARLIER OF A MONTAGNARD PF PLATOON ALONG WITH THEIR WEAPONS AND RADIOS. ACCORDING TO REPORTS, THE UNIT LEFT ITS OUTPOST GUARDING A BRIDGE ON QL-21, 20 KM EAST OF BAN ME THUOT, AND ENTERED THE JUNGLE TO JOIN THE KPA KOI DISSIDENTS. IN A MORE RECENT DEFECTION, ON OCTOBER 4, ANOTHER PF PLATOON MANNING AN OUTPOST ALONG QL-21 DESERTED ALLOWING THE UNIT'S LONE VIETNAMESE MEMBER TO REMAIN UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTROL. A GVN MSS INVESTIGATION HELD IN JUNE REVEALED THAT A FULRO COLONEL HAD GIVEN ORDERS TO PF'S OPERATING IN PHUOC

AN DISTRICT TO UNDERMAN THEIR OUTPOSTS AND AVOID CONDUCTING MILITARY OPERATIONS. SINCE SEPTEMBER 20, A TOTAL OF 43 PF AND 10 PSDF HAVE DEFECTED TAKING THEIR PERSONAL WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT. COLONEL LUAT, DARLAC PROVINCE CHIEF, COMPLAINED IN LATE SEPTEMBER TO CORPS HQS THAT RF/PF UNDER HIS COMMAND COULD NOT BE COUNTED ON TO ACT AGAINST THEIR MONTAGNARD BROTHERS. CORPS HQS HAS INDICATED IT INTENDS TO TRANSFER ONE RF (ETHNIC VIETNAMESE) COMPANY FROM CAM RANH TO DARLAC IN ORDER TO STRENGTHEN COLONEL LUAT'S HAND.

5. THE DARLAC TERRITORIAL FORCE PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, GO BEYOND THE DISRUPTIVE INFLUENCE OF MONTAGNARD DISSIDENTS. DARLAC'S TOTAL COMPLEMENT OF SECURITY FORCES CONSIST OF 7 UNDER-STRENGTH RF BNS PLUS ONE BN OF THE 44TH ARVN REGT ASSIGNED TO BAN ME THUOT. SECTOR OFFICERS REPORT THAT THE MORALE OF THEIR UNITS IS POOR. THEY CLAIM THAT RF AND PF ARE SHORT ESSENTIAL ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT SUCH AS BOOTS, UNIFORMS, HELMETS, PACKS. PROBLEMS ALSO PLAGUE THEIR LEADERSHIP. THERE ARE INSUFFICIENT MONTAGNARD OFFICERS AND NCO'S TO ADEQUATELY MAN THE SUB-SUBSECTORS RECENTLY ESTABLISHED (40 OF DARLAC'S 48 VILLAGES ARE ETHNICALLY MONTAGNARD). VIETNAMESE ASSIGNED TO MONTAGNARD VILLAGES HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE. LT. COLONEL VO, DEPUTY PROVINCE CHIEF FOR SECURITY, CONFESSES TO A COMPLETE LACK OF RELIABLE INTELLIGENCE AS TO THE DISPOSITION OR INTENTIONS OF COMMUNIST OR DISSIDENT FORCES. IN ANY EVENT, THE BULK OF DARLAC'S SECURITY FORCES ARE PRESENTLY TIED DOWN ALONG MAJOR LOC'S ATTEMPTING TO PROTECT TRAFFIC, LEAVING LITTLE FLEXIBILITY TO GAIN OFFENSIVE OPERATIONAL MOMENTUM.

6. OUR PROVINCE REPRESENTATIVE IN DARLAC WHO HAS BEEN IN THE AREA FOR MORE THAN SIX YEARS, SPEAKS ONE OR MORE OF THE MONTAGNARD LANGUAGES AND IS ON CLOSE TERMS WITH THE PEOPLE, REPORTS SERIOUS MALAISE AND A WIDESPREAD SENSE OF PUBLIC INSECURITY IN THE PROVINCE. HE NOTES THAT TRADITIONAL VIETNAMESE--MONTAGNARD RESENTMENTS ARE BEING RESURRECTED AND REFERS TO A "POLARIZATION" OF THE

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RACES. FEARS OF ETHNIC-BASED REPRISALS ARE CURTAILING NORMAL SOCIAL INTERCOURSE BETWEEN THE RACES. FEWER MONTAGNARD CAN BE

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ACTION EA-06

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 13261

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SEEN ON THE STREETS OR IN THE COFFEE HOUSES OF BAN ME THUOT AND THERE IS AN INCREASING RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF VIETNAMESE OR MONTAGNARDS TO VISIT THE OTHER'S VILLAGES. VIETNAMESE, WHO HAVE THE MEANS TO DO SO, ARE MOVING THEIR FAMILIES TO THE PROVINCIAL

CAPITAL. THE SITUATION ON THE ROADS HAS BECOME SUFFICIENTLY HAZARDOUS SO THAT THE GVN HAS IMPLEMENTED A STRICT POLICY OF OFFICIAL ROAD TRAVEL WITH GUN JEEPS AND TROOPS TO ESCORT OFFICIALS VISITING SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS.

7. ALTHOUGH DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE HAS BEEN OBTAINED SHOWING THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN VC/NVA FORCES AND KPA KOI'S DISSIDENTS HAS MARKEDLY DIMINISHED, THE SITUATION CANNOT HELP BUT AID THE COMMUNISTS. LOCAL OFFICIALS ARE CONCERNED BUT, THUS FAR, HAVE NOT SUCCEEDED IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO THE WORSENING SECURITY PROBLEM. ON SEPT 30 A HIGH-LEVEL MEETING WAS HELD IN DALAT, CHAIRED BY THE MINISTERS OF INTERIOR AND ETHNIC MINORITY AFFAIRS AND ATTENDED BY HIGHLAND PROVINCE CHIEFS AND MONTAGNARD REPRESENTATIVES. WHILE IT WAS SUPPOSED TO STUDY AND FIND SOLUTIONS TO MONTAGNARD PROBLEMS, MOST OF THE HIGHLANDER'S GRIEVANCES WERE DISMISSED BY THE MINISTERS AS

THE SAME OLD COMPLAINTS FOR MORE RESOURCES. A DIRECTIVE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ISSUED WHICH CALLED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EXISTING DECREES GUARANTEEING MONTAGNARD RIGHTS. WHETHER THIS WILL MAKE ANY APPRECIABLE DIFFERENCE IN THE WORSENE SITUATION
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IN DARLAC REMAINS TO BE SEEN. MEANWHILE, DISSATISFACTION WITH THE MINISTERS IS INCREASING AND, REPORTEDLY, EFFORTS ARE QUIETLY BEING MADE IN SAIGON AND ELSEWHERE TO FIND A SUITABLE REPLACEMENT.

8. ELSEWHERE, THERE HAS BEEN VERY SLIGHT MOVEMENT ON THE MONTAGNARD DISSIDENT FRONT. IN MID SEPTEMBER A KPA KOI

RECRUITING TEAM VISITED PHU BON PROVINCE BUT, REPORTEDLY, MET
WITH NO SUCCESS. IN KONTUM PROVINCE, THE MOVEMENT MAY HAVE HAD
SOMEWHAT GREATER APPEAL. THE CONGEN HAS RECEIVED UNCONFIRMED
REPORTS OF "FULRO" ACTIVITY IN THE PROVINCE BUT, AS YET, HAS
NOT RECEIVED ANY HARD FACTS.

SPEAR

UNQTE.
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